

City of Westminster



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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 18, 2020

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City proclaims local emergency in response to COVID-19 and County guidelines for public and private gatherings

WESTMINSTER, Calif. - Interim City Manager Sherry Johnson issued a proclamation of local emergency this morning in response to the coronavirus (COVID-19). While there are no confirmed cases of COVID-19 reported in Westminster, issuing the proclamation enhances the City's ability to access state and federal emergency funds or resources.

The proclamation will also allow the City to take additional measures in line with public health directives to reduce the spread COVID-19, and address the County of Orange's health order issued yesterday afternoon.

County Health Officer Dr. Nichole Quick issued an order essentially banning "public and private gatherings of any number of people, including at places of work, occurring outside a single household or living unit," and providing exemptions that include "essential services." The County has since clarified the health order is not a lockdown and will issue an amended health order. The City will provide an update as it becomes available.

To reduce the potential exposure and spread of COVID-19 to the residents and City employees, the City has taken action to practice responsible social distancing by limiting public access to City facilities and buildings and providing services remotely.

The City Council will meet on March 19, 2020 at 12:30 p.m. to ratify the proclamation declaring the local emergency. Members of the public are encouraged to watch the meeting live on Westminster TV Channel 3 or via online streaming at www.westminster-ca.gov.

Additional updates can be found on the city's dedicated coronavirus [webpage](#) and [social media](#).

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PROCLAMATION NO. 2020-01

A PROCLAMATION BY THE CITY MANAGER OF THE CITY OF WESTMINSTER, CALIFORNIA, ACTING AS THE DIRECTOR OF EMERGENCY SERVICES, DECLARING THE EXISTENCE OF A LOCAL EMERGENCY

WHEREAS, Westminster Municipal Code Section 2.48.060(A) empowers the City Manager as Director of Emergency Services for the City of Westminster Emergency Services Council, to declare the existence or threatened existence of a local emergency when the City is affected or likely to be affected by a public calamity; and

WHEREAS, Government Code Section 8550 et seq., including Section 8558(c), authorize the City Manager to proclaim a local emergency when the City is threatened by conditions of disaster or extreme peril to the safety of persons and property within the City that are likely to be beyond the control of the services, personnel, equipment, and facilities of the City; and

WHEREAS, a novel coronavirus, COVID-19, causes infectious disease and was first detected in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China in December 2019. Symptoms of COVID-19 include fever, cough, and shortness of breath; outcomes have ranged from mild to severe illness, and, in some cases, death. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has indicated the virus is a tremendous public health threat; and

WHEREAS, Chinese health officials have reported tens of thousands of cases of COVID-19 in China, with the virus reportedly spreading from person-to-person. COVID-19 illnesses, most of them associated with travel from Wuhan, are also being reported in 117 countries, with over 44,000 cases, including the United States; and

WHEREAS, on January 30, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the outbreak a "public health emergency of international concern" and on March 11, 2020, the WHO has elevated the public health emergency to the status of a pandemic. On January 31, 2020, United States Health and Human Services Secretary Alex M. Azar II declared a public health emergency for the United States to aid the nation's healthcare community in responding to COVID-19. On February 26, 2020 the County of Orange declared a local emergency and a local health emergency. On March 4, 2020, California Governor Gavin Newsom declared a State of Emergency in California; and

WHEREAS, on February 2, 2020, the federal government initiated the suspension of entry of foreign nationals who were in China during the 14-day period preceding their entry or attempted entry into the United States. United States citizens, residents, and their immediate family members who were in China during the 14-day period preceding their entry into the United States are permitted entry, but are redirected to one of 11 airports where the CDC has quarantine stations to undergo health screening. Depending on their health and travel history, they will have some level of restrictions on their movements for 14 days from the time they left China. On February 29, 2020, the President expanded

restrictions to include all aliens who were physically present within the Islamic Republic of Iran during the 14-day period preceding their entry or attempted entry into the United States, with additional restrictions being imposed on travel from Europe as of March 11, 2020; and

WHEREAS, as of March 12, 2020, the WHO reported that, to date, 125,048 confirmed cases of COVID-19, 4,613 of which resulted in death, across 117 countries; and

WHEREAS, in declaring a State of Emergency, the Governor indicated that, as of March 4, 2020, there were 129 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the United States, including 53 in California, and more than 9,400 Californians across 49 counties in home monitoring based on possible travel-based exposure to the virus, with officials expecting the number of cases in California, the United States, and worldwide to increase; and

WHEREAS, the Governor and the California Department of Health on March 11, 2020 issued a statement entitled "California Public Health Experts: Mass Gatherings Should be Postponed or Canceled Statewide to Slow the Spread of COVID-19," determining that gatherings should be postponed or canceled across the state until at least the end of March. Non-essential gatherings must be limited to no more than 250 people, while smaller events can proceed only if the organizers can implement social distancing of 6 feet per person. Gatherings of individuals who are at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19 should be limited to no more than 10 people, while also following social distancing guidelines. Furthermore, essential gatherings should only be conducted if the essential activity could not be postponed or achieved without gathering, meaning that some other means of communication could not be used to conduct the essential function; and

WHEREAS, the Governor on March 12, 2020 issued Executive Order N-25-20, ordering, inter alia, that all residents are to heed the orders and guidance of state and local public health officials; and

WHEREAS; on March 13, 2020, the President of the United States issued a proclamation declaring the COVID-19 outbreak in the United States as a national emergency, beginning March 1, 2020; and

WHEREAS, the City of Westminster has the power to impose measures to promote social distancing including but not limited to limitations on public events; and

WHEREAS, Westminster is a densely populated city within Orange County, which is the sixth largest county in the United States, with one of the highest population densities; and

WHEREAS, conditions of extreme peril to the safety of persons and property have arisen due to the potential introduction of COVID-19 to Westminster and Orange County; and

WHEREAS, such conditions are beyond the control of the services, personnel, equipment, and facilities of the City and require the combined forces of other political subdivisions to combat; and

WHEREAS, it is imperative to prepare for and respond to suspected or confirmed COVID-19 cases, to implement measures to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, and to prepare to respond to an increasing number of individuals requiring medical care and hospitalization; and

WHEREAS, if COVID-19 spreads in California at a rate comparable to the rate of spread in other countries, the number of persons requiring medical care may exceed locally available resources, and controlling outbreaks minimizes the risk to the public, maintains the health and safety of the community, and limits the spread of infection in the community and within the healthcare delivery system; and

WHEREAS, the mobilization of local resources, ability to coordinate interagency response, accelerate procurement of vital supplies, use mutual aid, and allow for future reimbursement by the state and federal governments will be critical to successfully responding to COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, the City Manager, as the City's Director of Emergency Services, has the power to declare a local emergency as authorized by Government Code section 8630 and Westminster Municipal Code section 2.48.060(A).

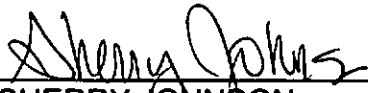
NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS PROCLAIMED AND ORDERED by the City Manager, the Director of Emergency Services for the City of Westminster, as follows:

- A. As contemplated in the Emergency Services Act contained in Government Code Section 8550 et seq., including Section 8558(c), and Section 2.48.020 of the Westminster Municipal Code, a local emergency exists based on the existence of conditions of disaster or of extreme peril to the safety of persons and property caused by an epidemic, as detailed in the recitals set forth above.
- B. The area of the City which is endangered/imperiled is the entire City.
- C. During the existence of this local emergency, the powers, functions, and duties of the emergency organization of this City shall be those prescribed by state law and by ordinances, resolutions, and orders of this City, including but not limited to the City of Westminster emergency response plan and Chapter 2.52 of the Westminster Municipal Code.
- D. The City Council shall review and ratify this proclamation within 7 days as required by state law, and if ratified, shall continue to exist until the City Council proclaims the termination of this local emergency. The City Council shall review the need for continuing the local emergency as required by

state law until it terminates the local emergency, and shall terminate the local emergency at the earliest possible date that conditions warrant.

- E. If the State of California does not, by April 1, 2020, provide eviction relief during this local emergency for residential tenants, City staff shall prepare and produce for the Council's consideration an urgency ordinance to provide such eviction relief.
- F. That the City of Westminster orders that, within the boundaries of the City of Westminster, the Public Health Experts' recommendations shall be deemed mandatory.
- G. That a copy of this proclamation be forwarded to the Director of California Governor's Office of Emergency Services requesting that the Director find it acceptable in accordance with State Law; that the Governor of California, pursuant to the Emergency Services Act, issue a proclamation declaring an emergency in the City of Westminster; that the Governor waive regulations that may hinder response and recovery efforts; that recovery assistance be made available under the California Disaster Assistance Act; and that the State expedite access to State and Federal resources and any other appropriate federal disaster relief programs.

PROCLAIMED this 18th day of March 2020.



SHERRY JOHNSON,
INTERIM CITY MANAGER
DIRECTOR OF EMERGENCY SERVICES



CHRISTIAN BETTENHAUSEN,
ASSISTANT CITY ATTORNEY

ATTEST:



CHRISTINE GORDON, CITY CLERK